

Concert performer — and proud of it

By Rawiri Wright

Being forced to leave school at 16 because of financial difficulties, was hard for a young Maori who wanted to go to university.

Eight years later, it was even harder for that not so young Maori, to go back to night school to try to catch up on his lost education.

But Trevor Horowaewae Maxwell says he has learnt to overcome such set-backs.

Employed by the Department of Maori Affairs Rotorua, as a community officer, Trevor has come from Ngongotaha Primary, through Western Heights High School, to being a Rotorua District Councillor.

"I enjoyed my childhood very much. Growing up in Rotorua meant a lot to me because I was close to the things I treasure most; my family, friends, and my Maoritanga," he said.

Apart from spending six months in Australia in 1966, aged 19, Trevor has spent all his life in Rotorua, working in and for the community.

"That first trip to Aussie taught me independence because I travelled alone. I was supposed to go with a mate but he pulled out at the last minute. My parents had a going away party for me so I had to go," Trevor recalls with a smile.

That trip was the first of many overseas trips for Trevor.

Most of these trips have been as a member of one touring Maori culture group or another.

Trevor began performing as a 10 year old in an Awahou (Rotorua) group in 1956 and in 1972 he took over as leader of the group.

"I'm proud to be the leader and tutor of the Ngati Rangiwewehi Maori Club, and it's pleasing that I have come up through the ranks and am now putting something back in," says Trevor.

He says he receives good back-up as tutor from his wife Adelaide, who has written songs and teaches the poi to the group.

"Winning the 1983 Polynesian Festival was the proudest moment in our lives. Not just for my wife and I, but also for Rangiwewehi and Te Arawa," says Trevor.

At past festivals Rangiwewehi has won the poi trophy twice and had other placings, but this is the first time they have been over-all winners.

When he was 12 years old, Trevor joined St Faith's Anglican Youth Club and helped to raise £667.16.7 for church renovations.

Performing in other Maori culture groups has allowed him to go twice around the world and visit such places

as Japan, Hong Kong, Hungary, Greece, Britain, Fiji, Hawaii and the U.S.S.R.

Trevor travelled with the N.Z. Theatre Trust on their 1970 World Tour, was leader of the Aotearoa Group accompanying the National Band on their 1978 world tour, and was co-leader of the N.Z. Tourist Promotions group in North America on their four trips, 1979-1982.

His first performing tour was a 14 day trip to Tahiti in 1966 with the Ohinemutu Cultural Club, then tutored by Mrs Kahu Morrison.

It was through these performances that Trevor met Adelaide, Mrs Morrison's daughter, and they married in 1969.

Later in 1966, Trevor toured Queensland, (Australia) with the group He Toa Takitini, led by Canon Wi Huata, and Rotorua guide John Smith.

Trevor has made 12 overseas cultural tours altogether, highlighted in 1978 by the world tour with the National Band.

The special attraction of this tour was that he was able to visit the area his great grandfather came from.

His great grandfather was Buchanan Maxwell, a Scotsman from the Dumfries area whose history can be traced back to 1241.

Buchanan Maxwell came to New Zealand on a whaling boat and married Te Aira.

Their son, Horowaewae, married Iranui Mohi (2nd wife). Their eldest son, Takiwa, married Pirihiira Te Amo, of Te Puke and had nine children. Trevor is the second eldest of this family and the eldest boy.

Another highlight was performing on New Zealand Day at Expo '70 in Japan. Trevor was then with the N.Z. Maori Theatre Trust who were joined on the day by Kiri Te Kanawa, Bunny Walters, the N.Z. National Band and the Aotearoa Maori Group.

The late Inia Te Wiata was the leader of the Theatre group and his death came as "a real shock" to the group.

"It was one of the finest groups to travel overseas, and Inia was the father of it," says Trevor.

Trevor and Adelaide named their only son, Inia, after the singer.

Today, Trevor wears many caps of responsibility in Rotorua. Including chairman of the Rotorua Primary School Committee, membership of the Radio N.Z. Maori and Pacific Is. Ad-

visory Committee, N.Z. Polynesian Festival Committee and Awahou Marae Committee.

As a Rotorua District Councillor, Trevor is concerned about the management of the geothermal fields.

He believes the council, not government departments, should have control of the fields.

He has tried to push moves through council to get the decision reversed but has so far been unsuccessful.

Trevor also favours the set-up of Maori International.

"Maori International is a very exciting possibility for us as a people. Not only here in Rotorua, but for Maori throughout the country.

"Not just in tourism either but in the promotion of culture and the growth of exports," says Trevor.

Under the direction of Kara Puketapu, "Maori Affairs changed their emphasis in 1977," said Trevor.

"They started moving more into community development, so when the job of community officer came up, I applied and was selected," he said.

Trevor is concerned about unemployment and has taken an active part in organising youth wananga to outline to young people how to go about getting themselves ready to join the work force.

He has also spent a lot of his time working in other development projects.

He would like to "improve the social and cultural conditions for all people," and believes that "people are more important than property."

"I'm a 'doer' of things and have made a personal pledge to try to do my best in all things," said Trevor.

He doesn't see himself as a radical and believes that with 'team effort,' things can be achieved with the same or better results.

Through his work as a community officer, Trevor has had much to do with young people.

"The way I was educated, I know what a lot of them are going through, and how important education is."

But he hopes they won't lose heart and says, "the power of love is stronger than the love for power. There is aroha out there — and plenty of it."

**FACES OF
ROTORUA**